

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

How to Score Diversity Practices

Diversity practices are the efforts of contractors to include New York State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (“MWBEs”) in their business practices. Diversity practices may include past, present, or future actions and policies, and include activities of contractors on contracts with private entities and governmental units other than the State of New York. Assessing the diversity practices of contractors enables contractors to engage in meaningful, capacity-building collaborations with MWBEs.

This guide provides instructions on how to determine whether diversity practices should be scored on your procurement, step-by-step instructions as to how to apply diversity practices, and suggestions as to how to customize diversity practices to the particular needs of your organization.

Is My Procurement Subject to Diversity Practices?

Diversity practices are intended to be applied on procurements in which procurement personnel exercise their subjective judgment in selecting one or more successful contractors on the basis of best value, NOT on procurements that are awarded based upon lowest price. The following checklist illustrates when diversity practices should be scored as part of a procurement:

1. Is the procurement based upon best value (RFP or RFQ)? Yes No
2. Is the anticipated award \$250,000 or greater? Yes No
3. Is scoring for diversity practices practical, feasible, and appropriate? Yes No

If the answer to all three questions is “Yes,” the procurement should be scored for diversity practices. If the answer to questions 1 or 2 is “No,” no further action is needed and the procurement should not be scored for diversity practices. If the answer to question 3 is “No,” such determination should be documented in writing and diversity practices should not be scored. For more information on when a procurement is subject to diversity practices, please see the frequently asked questions below.

Frequently Asked Questions

May I score diversity practices and award points to contractors that are MWBEs based upon their MWBE certification on the same procurement? No. Procurements may award points to contractors based upon their efforts to collaborate with and promote MWBEs (diversity practices) OR award points to contractors based upon whether they are certified as MWBEs (quantitative factor), but may not score for both. Procurements may not be scored for diversity practices when a quantitative factor is applied.

When is it NOT practical, feasible, or appropriate to score diversity practices? In circumstances where MWBE firms are not available to participate as subcontractors or suppliers in the industry that is the subject of the procurement, contractors' ability to implement diversity practices may be too minimal to score respondents to an RFP or an RFQ. However, it is important to note that diversity practices should be scored when MWBEs are available to participate as subcontractors or suppliers in the industry, even if such subcontracting or supplying opportunities do not exist on the specific project that is the subject of your procurement.

Additionally, certain methods of identifying contractors may not be conducive to scoring for diversity practices. For example, where an RFQ is to be used to identify the availability of contractors and inform the contents of a future RFP, it may be appropriate to defer scoring of diversity practices until the RFP used to select the successful contractor or contractors is ultimately released.

Should I score for diversity practices where multiple vendors will be selected via a procurement, and the award to each of them is anticipated to be less than \$250,000? Yes. Diversity practices should be scored where the aggregated spending via a procurement is expected to equal or exceed \$250,000, even if the amount allocated to each successful contractor is less than \$250,000.

Scoring for Diversity Practices

Once you determine to score diversity practices as part of a procurement, you must identify the number of points you intend to allocate to contractors' diversity practices and include appropriate language in your RFP or RFQ, score the diversity practices of contractors using the diversity practices matrix, and weight each score in accordance with the percentage of points allocated to diversity practices.

Where an organization determines to score diversity practices as part of determining best value on a procurement, the RFP or RFQ in question should include the following: (1) a provision indicating that diversity practices will be scored, (2) the maximum number of points that may be awarded based upon respondents' diversity practices, and (3) a diversity practices questionnaire that respondents may provide as part of their response to the RFP or RFQ. A sample provision indicating that diversity practices will be scored is provided below:

[Name of Agency] has determined, pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, that the assessment of the diversity practices of respondents to this procurement is practical, feasible, and appropriate. Accordingly, respondents to this procurement shall be required to include as part of their response to this procurement, as described in [Section ###] herein, forms [Diversity Form Numbers].

The diversity practices questionnaire provided by the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development provides eight questions for respondents to answer. Your organization may include additional questions, as discussed in more detail on page 5. The following provides a guide to scoring responses to each of the questions.

Question 1

Question 1 solely addresses whether the respondent employs a chief diversity officer. In order to receive points for a response to question 1, a respondent should provide all of the information requested, including evidence of initiatives performed by the chief diversity officer. Merely identifying a chief diversity officer without providing the requested information should result in a score of zero.

Questions 2 and 3

These questions direct respondents to provide information on the share of expenditures that the respondents made with MWBEs. Only the prior fiscal year of a respondent should be taken into account when assigning a score to questions 2 and 3. Any additional data that respondents provide illustrating expenditures made with MWBEs in other fiscal years should be disregarded.

In addition, any data regarding expenditures made to businesses certified as MWBEs by an entity other than the State of New York should be disregarded. Expenditures made to businesses with certifications other than MWBE, such as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and Service- Disabled Veteran-owned Business Enterprises, are not to be considered in this analysis.

Question 4

Respondents may score points in response to question 4 by identifying industry-specific technical training of MWBEs. Technical training is specific to the industry in question, and does not include generic training in skills that are transferrable across industries. Examples of trainings that do not qualify as technical training include trainings in managerial skills and leadership, effective communication, and professional development and networking. Examples of technical training topics include the use, installation, or safe handling of particular products, the use of industry-specific IT, and industry-specific sales and customer service strategies.

In assessing the robustness of a respondent's technical training, you should take into account the duration of the technical training program, the number of MWBEs served, and the total number of hours devoted to technical training of MWBEs. The characteristics of a robust technical training program will vary based upon the nature of the industry and the associated opportunities for MWBE training. However, characteristics of technical training programs fitting the "minimum" scoring criterion will typically be that the respondent has been providing technical training for one year or less, that the respondent has provided fewer than one hundred hours of technical training, or that the respondent has provided technical training to only one MWBE firm in a contracting area for which there is significant MWBE availability.

Question 5

In order for a respondent to receive points for its response to question 5, the respondent must provide documentation demonstrating its participation in a mentor-protégé program approved by a governmental entity. Such governmental entity need not necessarily be the State of New York.

Appropriate documentation of the existence of a mentor-protégé program will vary based upon the approving governmental entity. Only documents generated by a governmental entity should be accepted to demonstrate the existence of a mentor-protégé program.

A robust mentor-protégé program must include the following elements:

- The mentee must be able to meaningfully participate in the delivery of contract requirements.
- For services contracts: at least one element of the scope must be performed by the MWBE with the Prime serving as mentor. Multi-year contracts must have a plan in place to expose the MWBE to each element of the scope through the lifetime of the contract.
- Mentor and mentee must enter into an agreement, approved by a governmental entity, which outlines the expectations of each party.
- Specific metrics must be identified which will be used to measure the effectiveness and success of the Mentor/Protégé relationship.

Question 6

Question 6 evaluates both the existence of MWBE goals on the part of the respondent in its own contracting, and the respondent's achievement of these goals. Whether a goal is robust depends on the availability of MWBEs in the industry in question. One tool to assist you in determining the availability of MWBE firms in the industry is the New York State Contract System MWBE Directory <<https://ny.newnycontracts.com/>>. This analysis should, to the extent possible, be based upon subcontracting activities that are available in the industry in which the respondent is engaged, not solely the availability of MWBE subcontractors for the procurement being made by your organization.

Once you have evaluated the robustness of the goal, you must take into account the share of the goal that the respondent has achieved. A respondent should only receive a robust score if the respondent has achieved a significant portion of an appropriate goal; achieving a small percentage of a robust goal should not entitle a respondent to a robust score.

Question 7

Question 7 considers whether a respondent has an immersive, formal program to promote the use of MWBEs as suppliers. A formal supplier diversity program must be documented via a program policy manual or similar document describing the requirements for participation and elements of the program, as well as documentation of program activities.

Characteristics of a supplier diversity program meeting the minimum requirement for the respondent to be awarded points could include a supplier diversity program with weak verification procedures focused solely on creating a list of diverse suppliers from which the respondent may procure goods or services. A robust supplier diversity program may be characterized by rigorous verification of MWBE status, plans for outreach to MWBE suppliers, and training and education programs designed to increase the capacity of MWBE suppliers.

Question 8

The final question considers the use of MWBEs on the procurement for which diversity practices are being scored. This is the only criterion that considers the circumstances of the procurement exclusively, without regard to the respondent's other activities to promote MWBEs. The robustness of a utilization plan is to be assessed based upon the availability of MWBEs to perform as subcontractors and suppliers to the respondent on the procurement. As with question 6, you should refer to the MWBE Directory in order to determine the availability of MWBEs.

Determine the Weighted Score

Once you have added the scores for all eight questions for a respondent, multiply that score based upon the weight you have assigned to diversity practices on the procurement. For example, if diversity practices account for 8% of the available points on your RFP and a respondent achieves a total score of 50 points for diversity practices on the diversity practices matrix, that respondent's weighted score is the product of 50 points and .08, or 4 points.

Customizing Diversity Practices

The eight questions reflected on the diversity practices questionnaire constitute the minimum required to assess the diversity practices of respondents. You may add additional questions to the diversity practices questionnaire to customize it to your procurement activities. In order to determine whether additional fields may be useful, consider some of the following questions:

- Are there particular resources or skills needed to serve as a subcontractor or supplier in the industry?
- Are there technical or financial barriers to entry in the industry?
- Could respondents facilitate MWBE training and participation in the industry in ways not reflected on the questionnaire?
- Are there specific types of MWBE subcontractors or suppliers that are particularly underutilized in the industry in question?

In the case that you decide to include additional questions on the diversity practices questionnaire, you must revise the diversity practices matrix accordingly to reflect any points to be awarded to respondents for additional questions.